

Commercial Clippings

A second cable from the mainland to Vancouver Island is to be laid immediately by the British Columbia Telephone Co. The cost will be \$350,000.

From April 5th to September 23rd, the vessels of the C. P. O. S. brought from European ports a total of 77,439 passengers, of whom, 26,226 were cabin, and 51,213, steerage passengers.

THE SLUMP IN COW-HIDES.—A glance at the figures of 20 years ago shows that cow-hides now sell on the London market for about the same price as they did then. Today from 7 to 9 cents is paid; 20 years ago, 6 cents. The comparison has given rise to some discussion in Britain in regard to the price of shoes now and then.

FAILED TO MAKE RETURNS.—Through J. A. Shryburt, of the Industrial Census Department, the Canadian Government has taken action against several firms in St. Catharines, Ont., charging them with failure to supply information to the department as to their operations, which should have been reported in February. Shryburt says these individuals and firms were repeatedly asked to make the report.

WANT LOWER RATE FOR SHOES.—An application for reduced freight rates for boots and shoes by the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, Montreal, will be heard by the Board of Railway Commissioners at Ottawa today, Tuesday, October 19, at 10 a.m. Provision is desired for a third class Canadian freight classification, with a minimum carload of 20,000 pounds, on felt boots and shoes, not otherwise specified, in cases, and rubber boots and shoes. For some time there has been a demand by the Montreal trade in this connection. The Board of Trade and the C. M. A. will appear at the hearing.

STEADY PRICE DECLINE.—That there will be a falling-off in prices amounting in some instances to as much as 50 per cent, within the next six or seven months was the opinion expressed by delegates to the convention of the Purchasing Agents' Association which was held at Chicago last week.

"We do not believe there is going to be any crash or panic," said A. Reinhardt, vice-chairman of the convention committee, "but all of the hundreds of buyers I have talked with seem to believe that the peak in prices has been reached and that there will be a steady decline from now on, in some instances as much as 50 per cent. I have found no one who believed that there would be a return to pre-war prices for at least a couple of years, but all appear to have faith in the tendency downward."

OPPORTUNITIES IN INDIA.—The importance of Canadian manufacturers realizing the great industrial development now taking place in India is emphasized in a special report on trade with India which has been prepared by P. F. Scharsmidt, for the Department of Trade and Commerce, after visiting all the big trade centres of Britain's greatest Crown colony. The report notes that the Indian Government has adopted an energetic policy to increase industrialism, and that the spending power of the four hundred million people who inhabit India and Ceylon is rapidly increasing. The commissioner states that in discussing trade matters with various commercial bodies and firms in India he was assured of an earnest desire on the part of the importers to confine their orders to the Empire. He expresses the view that Canadian manufacturers should take advantage of this favorable attitude, and urges the need of direct steamship connection between Canada and India.

Lumber shipments from the port of St. John, N.B., to the United States during the three months ending June, were valued at \$1,467,377 as compared with \$464,545 for the same period last year.

During the month of September, Nova Scotia exported more than 120,000 barrels of apples to the United Kingdom, and it is predicted that before the apple shipping season closes, the total exportation to English markets will be half a million dollars.

The slump in the prices of raw wool was reflected last week in the sensational drop of the retail price of woollen yarn, the cheapest grade of which declined from \$3.25 to \$1.85 per lb.

REFINERIES SLOWING DOWN.—The machinery in most Canadian refineries is slackening, and in St. John it is not expected there will be much doing for some time. Many employees have been laid off at the Atlantic refineries, and it was said that the plant may be practically idle for a month.

CANADIAN CHEESE IN HOTELS.—At the Brockville cheese board meeting last week, John Elliott suggested that some means be devised whereby Canadian cheese might be served on the tables in Canadian hotels. He said there were thousands of British tourists who visited Canada and complained of the cheese furnished at the hotels as very inferior to the Canadian cheese to which the people of the British Isles are accustomed. Cheesemen said that the Canadian consumer preferred green cheese, while the Britisher liked old cheese. Mr. Elliott declared that the question should be brought before the Associated Boards of Trade of Ontario meeting in Belleville in November.

MORE COAL FOR CANADA.—A great drive was begun last week by the masters of the coal situation in Canada and the United States to relieve the anthracite fuel situation. While Canada will not see immediate results, it is expected that in two weeks Canada will be working nicely to catch up with the shortage which, today in Ontario alone, amounts to 100,000 tons in anthracite coal. The normal supply for Ontario is 150 cars a day, but this has been cut to 55 cars, and got down to four cars a day during the worst period of the recent strike of miners. The situation is to be improved by action taken by the Interstate Commerce Commission of Washington, but Canada is co-operating as well in her own interests. A new Canadian regulation notice of which has been received in Toronto, gives power to the provincial fuel administrators to take possession of any cars of coal which are on sidings, more than six days. Two days' notice, however, must be given the consigners before the coal is confiscated.

GUELPH COAL PRICES FAIR.—The Board of Commerce in a statement issued last week gives its findings following an inquiry into complaints that unduly high prices have been charged by the coal dealers of Guelph for domestic sizes of anthracite coal. The Board finds that the consumers of Guelph on the whole have been more than fairly treated by their dealers in the past and that during the present crisis they are doing all that possibly can be done to assure sufficient tonnage to meet all wants at the best possible prices. "Their position," says the Board, "is unenviable for the reason that they are finding it almost impossible to get coal at any price, and if they pay the outrageous figures asked they are looked upon as profiteers. There is profiteering on most of the coal received, but not by the local dealers. Where this profiteering is done is quite plain when it is noted that premiums of from one to seven dollars per ton are demanded and received across the line."

The statement says that the representatives of the Board went thoroughly into the affairs of the Guelph dealers and found that while in most cases the increases demanded were quite justifiable, yet in one case it was shown that no advance should have been made, and in another case an unreasonable increase was added. The Board's ruling is that in the first mentioned case the dealer must reduce his price one dollar per ton insofar as old stock is concerned, and make refunds to all purchasers who have been overcharged. The decision with regard to the second dealer is that on nut coal the price be reduced one dollar per ton, and on stove and egg, \$1.25 per ton, covering present stock, and that refunds be immediately made to purchasers at higher figures.

BOOTMAKERS SHOULD ADMIT PROFIT.—There has been too much shifting of responsibility in trade circles, The Shoe and Leather Reporter says. Men in one branch of an industry have endeavored to ease their own situation by pointing to the men in another branch. The public usually concludes when there is a "passing of the buck" that both parties to the dispute are equally guilty. Members of the leather and shoe industry should stop this foolish crimination and recrimination, this game of the pot calling the kettle black. Why not admit that large profits were made by everybody? As a matter of fact, none but a child or an idiot, if engaged in business of a staple character during the saturnalia of buying following the signing of the armistice, could help scoring good profits. The buyers themselves made a runaway market. The buying public forgot prudence and conservatism and went on a merchandise spree, spending money like a drunken sailor. When the inevitable period of remorse came the revelers blamed every one but themselves. It may be that we should have all shut up shop and refused to profit by the extravagance of the people. What we did was to follow the inclinations of the buying public. We gave them high-priced goods when the craze raged, and now we are making shoes to sell at moderate rates in response to the wishes of the customers we serve.

DOWNWARD TREND OF PRICES.—A continued downward movement in prices is shown by the report of the cost of living branch of the labor department prepared for publication in the September issue of the Labor Gazette. The report states that the departmental index number of wholesale prices was down to 326.6 in September as compared with 330.2 for August, 346.8 for July, 349.3 for June, and 356.6 for May. For September, 1919, the index number was 301.5.

Prices are still far more than double those prevailing in pre-war days. In September, 1914, the index number was 141.3, and in September, 1913, it stood at 134.4.

The average cost of a list of 29 staple foods in terms of retail prices in some sixty cities in Canada, at the middle of September, was \$15.95, as compared with \$16.42 for August, \$16.84 for July, \$16.92 for June, \$14.33 for September, 1919, \$13.31 for September, 1918, and \$7.83 for September, 1914.

Grains, cattle, beef, sheep and lamb, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, flour, sugar, molasses, glucose, coffee, cotton, silk, hides, leather, lead, quick-silver, tin, coke, some lines of lumber, linseed oil, turpentine, copperas, malt and raw rubber decline in price, but hog products, butter, cheese, eggs, milk, mackerel, bananas, oranges, salt, brass, chain, coal, gasoline, wooden pails and tubs were higher.

In retail prices, states the report, averages were lower for beef, lard, flour, rolled oats, sugar and potatoes, but higher for pork, bacon, eggs and butter, coal, wood and coal oil were higher, and rent averaged slightly lower.

The chief decreases, states the report, were seasonal, due to good crops and large supplies on the markets, but there was also a continuation of the

downward movement in the prices of many materials. On the other hand, some lines of manufactured goods showed a rising tendency, and some raw materials recovered slightly from previous declines.

ISSUING TRADERS' LICENSES.—The regulation which required all dealers subject to the traders' license law to take out a license from the Inland Revenue Department before November 1st, has been amended to give dealers fifteen days grace after that date.

Under the provisions of the law few persons will escape the necessity of a license, since its terms embrace almost every kind of dealer. Most of the licenses so far issued have been to wholesalers and jobbers, covering the sales tax. These had recognized the demands of the law and lost no time in complying with it. Inland Revenue offices have received an ample supply of luxury stamps against the time when the Department at Ottawa issues the order for enforcement of the new system of collecting this tax by stamps. Already a large supply of these stamps has been sold to the various banks, which will, with their branches, be authorized to sell the luxury stamps to dealers who have the proper licenses and mechanism for cancelling them.

These stamps are issued in denominations of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 cents, 25 cents, 50 cents, and multiples of a dollar up to \$10. The smaller denominations can also be used for business paper, stock transfers, etc. so that they will be of general use. As soon as the order comes from Ottawa the Inland Revenue Offices will start selling these stamps to dealers, and the banks will also start their business, with a margin of one per cent, profit to themselves.

SUGAR MEN MEET GOVERNMENT.—Representatives of the Montreal Sugar Refining interests met Premier Meighen, Sir George Foster and Rt. Hon. Charles Doherty last week and had a long conference on the sugar situation. The premier had to leave to catch the 10.30 train for Toronto and the conference continued for some time afterwards with the other Ministers. It was announced, after the conference, that there was nothing to give out at present, but the government had the matter under consideration. It was pointed out, however, that in such a situation, banks and credits might be very heavily involved and that the whole situation might become serious. In Cuba a moratorium had been declared because of the sugar situation. It is understood that the matter will be further discussed on the return of the Premier before his departure for the West.

MISTAKE TO QUOTE N. Y. FUNDS.—The Canadian Trade Commissioner in the British West Indies, has received complaints from a number of firms in different islands of the British West Indies to the effect that Canadian business firms are demanding payment of their accounts in New York funds. They are highly indignant and express the opinion that in view of the preferential trade agreement between Canada and the British West Indies the Canadian exporters to the British West Indies should make quotations in Canadian currency.

One large importing firm in Barbados said that after giving a large order he found that payment was demanded in New York funds. He immediately cancelled the order and placed it with an English firm which gave him the benefit of the English exchange in remitting. It is pointed out that the tariff preference is given to England as well as Canada, and the English do not ask for quotations in United States funds.

Another complaint coming from the British West Indies is that certain Canadian firms when written to regarding business refer the British West India inquiries to their agents in New York city. They say that if Canadian firms propose to do business through New York houses they may as well deal directly with New York themselves.